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THE UNBOUNDED BENEVOLENCE OF GOD:

A Sermon

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Romans viii. 32.—"*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?*"

If ever intelligent and sensitive creatures were placed in a condition to need a hope above them, to strengthen their hearts in the day of trouble, we, dwellers in the dust, find ourselves in that condition. Children, in their utter ignorance, and total blindness to the future, do not more need the provident care and watchful kindness of a father, than we need the guidance of a reconciled God. Widows, in the extremity of their helplessness and dependence, are not more worthy objects of compassion than all of us are every moment of our lives. And shipwrecked mariners need not strain their eyes more to look out for help from the land, or tax their energies more to grasp the floating fragments of a wreck, than we to look up to the hills "from whence cometh our help," and to cleave to the promises of God in Christ Jesus. Take man, in his very best estate, when his mind is keen to discern and his energies mighty to execute, the best and wisest plans of worldly aggrandizement—and yet, man at his very "best estate is altogether vanity." What can he do for the best interests even of those who are dearest to his heart, or most dependent on his care? How can he avert from them, or from himself, the most desolating and terrible afflictions? How can he save his own life from destruction, or provide a ransom for his own soul? Take the

world of mankind as we find them—who are not struggling, like a shipwrecked mariner, for life, and amongst the broken fragments of his ruined prospects, his lost comforts, his dying friends, his expiring hopes? If there is no power above us, we are infinitely worse off than the beasts that perish! If there be no foothold for our hopes in a better and brighter world, happy had it been for us if we had never been born. If the pilot of the vessel and the ruler of the storm be not our friend, willing and able to stand by and succor us, better had it been if we had never launched forth on the ocean of life; most happy if we had long since been overwhelmed by its storms! Who is there that does not feel the need of a friend stronger than man; of fields of happiness brighter than earth displays; of hopes, stronger and surer than any which life affords? Who is there but would give worlds for that to trust in, which neither time, nor accident, nor human malice, nor death itself could, in the slightest degree, affect—far less destroy?

It is the glory of the true religion, that it not only furnishes this anchorage ground, not only provides exceeding great and precious promises, but also inclines and teaches the heart to rely upon them. It enables, nay, constrains the sincere believer to look for his strength and consolatian to the care of the Father of the Universe; to the love and compassion of the Almighty Savior, and to the grace and help of the Holy Ghost. Thus faith, in all times of need, becomes reliance, trust, confidence. The eternal and unchangeable world seems like a reality: new freshness and power are imparted to the blessed promises. In the solitude of the closet; in the solemnities of public worship; in the hour of impending calamity, at the moment of utter desolation and misery, this confidence in God is as "an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast." It entereth into *that* within the vail, whither the forerunner hath for us entered. And the heart which hath this hope is comforted; all its anxieties are assuaged; all its fears are gone; all its troubles are removed, and the blessed promise is proved to be true—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

When we reflect upon the greatness of the privilege of reposing all our cares upon God, and then think of our own utter unworthi-

ness and nothingness, the question naturally occurs, Will GOD fulfil these promises in the case of such guilty creatures as we are? Are these great and precious promises for us? Have we any reasonable ground for hope, that in the time of our utmost need we shall find them true, and realize their divine support?

This is precisely the subject to which it is my purpose to call your attention at the present time. Numberless are the grounds of encouragement for putting our trust in GOD; we shall have time to enumerate but a few; and shall therefore attempt to select the strongest.

1. It is no slight ground that we are shut up to this one only hope; for if, in the time of anxiety, in the day of adversity, and in the hour of death, the LORD of Heaven and earth either cannot, or will not help us, who can, or who will? And as, on the other hand, this thought imparts to all our applications to Him, the energy of despair; so, on the other, it awakens the liveliest hope, inasmuch as no man can bring himself to believe that GOD hath formed him with unfailing resources of hope within, only that he may be forever disappointed.

2. The attributes of infinite power and boundless mercy which, we are taught to believe, reside in the LORD our GOD, in their utmost perfection, afford the most abundant encouragement for us to put our trust in him. No situation can be beset with such difficulties that His wisdom cannot easily devise a way for our escape: none can be threatened with such dangers, or oppressed with such positive calamities, but that his power and mercy can, if he pleases, bring instant relief. The attributes of JEHOVAH, are to the souls of the faithful, like a munition of rocks.

3. But, blessed be GOD, my brethren, we have a more sure word of promise, to which you will do well to give heed. To certain classes and descriptions of persons, He hath engaged, by an oath, that he would give them whatever they ask, in a certain name, and in a particular way. He hath expressly covenanted to give them far more than they are able to ask, or even to think. He hath sworn by Himself, that their "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for them a far more *exceeding* and *eternal* weight of glory"—nay, that "all things shall work

together for" their "good." If we could be assured that we belonged to this highly favored class; that we did truly ask in the right way, through the all-prevailing name, I am quite sure that our imaginations could not conceive of language more appropriate, more rich, more eloquent, and every way more full of consolation, than the words of the promises of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. The Christians who first heard and received them, were often known, as well they might be, to sing songs of exultation and joy in their dungeons, whilst smarting under the terrible effects of scourging and chains; nay, they were sometimes heard to say that they always,— even in bonds, imprisonments, and deaths,—that they always triumphed in CHRIST; and in truth they were taught such an uncommon estimate of things that one of them has written, "To us it is given"—speaking of it as the highest favor and privilege,—"to us it is given in behalf of CHRIST, not only to believe on his name, but also to suffer for his sake."

4. If these are the *feelings*, the bursts of strong emotions from the hearts of those who have truly been taught to trust in GOD, we may expect a similar strain of wonderful and *triumphant argumentation*. That they could and did argue thus, our text is a blessed example and proof. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not, with him, also *freely* give us *all things*?" Here are astonishing promises indeed, the love of the Father of the Universe shown, by delivering up his own Son to shame, and suffering, and death, for us miserable sinners. And what a glorious inference this! "How will he not with him, freely give us all things." If this is not divine and transcendently glorious reasoning, than I know not what is. After strictly examining it, must we not admit that GOD has been at infinite pains that we should have strong consolation, we, who "have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us in the Gospel?"

Very briefly, such my brethren, are a few of the strongest encouragements we have for trusting in GOD. Amid this changeful and dying world there is no other refuge for us; and we have in His character, and in the word of his oath and promise, the highest assurances that he is able and willing to help and to save to the uttermost. Nay, more, He himself, puts petitions and arguments

into our mouths, which carry along with them divine evidence of their truth and power, and will assuredly, if our hearts employ them, bring down the richest blessings from above.

But, with deepest solicitude may we ask, to whom these promises, and the privilege of trusting in the Most High GOD, truly belong? Do they belong to me? Do they belong to all of us? Are they our birthright? Is there no crime—no course of life by which they can be forfeited? Surely we cannot employ a few moments more profitably than by endeavoring to solve these questions.

It is evident then, I think, that the privilege of reposing undoubted confidence in the promises of GOD, and applying them to our *own* case, does not belong, as a matter of course, to every son and daughter of affliction. For the idea inseparable from a privilege is, that it is not common to all; if it were, how could it be said that some enjoy a distinction or privilege above the rest? It is equally evident that those who never think of the promises; who have no wish for those blessings to which they relate; who never ask them of GOD, or look to them for comfort; can have no shadow of claim to them: such, most assuredly, have neither part nor lot in these things. It is perfectly evident, therefore, that some specification is necessary. And surely none can have so good a right to point out to whom the promises belong, as He who hath been pleased freely to make them. And the diligent student of the Bible will be struck, perhaps, with nothing more than that almost every specific promise—certainly the greatest and best of the promises—are immediately connected with some intimation, or some description or other, of the class of persons, the kind of characters, for whom the promise is meant. Of this the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount furnish a striking example;—there being remarkable appropriateness in the promise, to the description of character to which it belongs. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see GOD," &c.

In the Epistles the same principle evidently prevails. Who are they for whom all things shall work together for good? even those "who love GOD, and are called according to his purpose." Who are they "whose light afflictions shall work out for them a far

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" even those "who look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen?" Who are they who may humbly urge the argument of our text, and ask for "all things?" None surely but believers in the sacrifice of CHRIST, and thankful receivers of the benefits of *his* cross and passion!

This course of argument and the whole tenor of the foregoing discourse, lead naturally to the following reflections:

1. The appropriate, the peculiarly precious promises of the Gospel, belong only to those who are truly sorry for their sins; who sincerely believe the promises of GOD in CHRIST JESUS; to those who daily repair to these promises as the main pillar and ground of their hope and comfort; to those who plead for the fulfilment of these promises, as far the greatest of all blessings; to those who are endeavoring to please GOD in newness of life, and whose most precious hopes and consolations, for time and eternity, are derived from a simple, child-like reliance upon the truth of GOD, in all his gracious promises.

2. If this be true, then the condition of the thoughtless gay, and of the prayerless rich and prosperous, is unspeakably miserable? For, what is youth; what is wealth; what the flush of prosperity; what the spring-tide of life? They are but the sweetness of morning, before the darkness of night—the brilliancy of the cloud, before the bursting of the tempest—the calmness of an Italian evening, before the eruption of a volcano. One of their own prophets, a poet of their own, hath written—

> "What are the pleasures of this life, in sooth,
> A torrent's smoothness ere it dash below."

Then who, if the promises of GOD are not theirs, who shall stand by them, when youth and health are exchanged for sickness and coming death—when prosperity shall, as shortly it must, be succeeded by adversity and sorrow? Who will stand by these wretched, deserted sufferers, when earth is receding from their grasp, and the promises of GOD are not theirs? Imagination cannot conceive a victim of wretchedness more utterly desolate than a lover of the world, torn from all that his heart pants after and

adheres to; whilst the Heavens above him are gathering blackness, and he is compelled to feel to what eternal beggary and wretchedness he has reduced himself, by heaping up treasures upon earth, without a thought of making himself rich towards GOD. Think of this, ye who are now flushed with prosperity, and be persuaded to lay up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come! Think of this, ye whose sense of dissatisfaction and wretchedness already warns you that, aside from the favor of GOD, there is no happiness; and over whose prospects the shadows of disappointment, and the forebodings of approaching death, are already spread? And oh! be entreated to exchange your dross for gold; be persuaded to accept of the promises of GOD for *your* portion, and to live upon them, in humble hope, as your *all in all.*

3. To draw these remarks towards a conclusion, let us, my dear Christian brethren, diligently examine into the evidence of our being the children, and the heirs of GOD'S gracious promises in JESUS CHRIST; for if we can settle the point that we are in our hearts truly sorry for our sins; that we steadfastly believe the promises of GOD, and desire nothing in comparison with an interest in them; if we do rest upon them, and daily plead them, with our covenant-keeping GOD, and cleave to them as to our last hope, and only refuge; then it matters exceedingly little what forms of sorrow haunt our imaginations, or mar our present peace; it matters, too little to be thought of, what difficulties or discouragements beset our path; "for if GOD be for us, who can be against us." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him also freely give us all things."

It will not do for our doubts and fears to rise up alarmed, and say—such blessings can never belong to creatures stained with sin as we have been: such promises cannot be the portion of such wayward, ungrateful, and unprofitable servants as we are. It is no such thing. The promises are for the unworthy, the guilty, and the miserable, provided they are only, at the same time, the penitent, and the sincere.

The saints of old doubtless felt and said just what you now say and feel; and yet which of them was not the special care of the

unchangeable JEHOVAH. What, if the fulfilment of his promises was long delayed;—his oath and his faithfulness never changed. Moses was forty years old before the predictions and wonders attendant upon his birth seemed to be even in the way of their accomplishment. And then how was it at first? disaster and exile!—exile of another forty years continuance was the result of the first striking event which marked his life. Yet he was patient all these long years, for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. "He esteemed the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, because he had respect unto the recompense of reward." Be not depressed, then, humble believer, "The LORD is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness." For "He seeth the end from the beginning," and through the darkest and most disastrous hours is steadily aiming at the good of all those who trust in HIM.

Why then, beloved friends, do we so often have occasion to rebuke ourselves for unbelief? Why are we so slow to take the promises as ours? to apply them to our own case, and to live upon the precious things which they provide for us? In times past we have come—at least we have tried to come—even to the very feet of Him who has loved us, and died for us, and to cast our cares upon him. We have felt the insupportable burden of guilt removed by trusting in Him, and in Him *alone*. We resort to him daily, to cast our souls and the souls of our children, and of our beloved friends, upon him anew. And when we look forward through the dark vista of approaching years, anticipate the evils which must befal our children in the latter day, and act over in imagination the last hours of our own suffering lives, what can we do—what comfort can we find, but just to come to the holy and merciful Savior, as we first came to HIM, weary and heavy laden, and to trust him *wholly* for our entire salvation? Are we enabled to do this with some measure of joy and peace? Can we do it with humble hope and holy confidence? Oh! then if we can trust HIM for the greater, why cannot we trust Him for the less? If we can trust our SOULS in his hands, why not trust the interest of our perishable BODIES to his care? If we can find peace, whilst leaning upon his arm, and crossing the cold, deep waters of Jordan, is it not a

shame to us, and highly injurious to Him, if we cannot commit our paltry cares and petty anxieties to his will, perfectly assured "that all things shall work together for our good."

Let the irresistible argument of our text come *home* with *power* to our hearts, and perfectly satisfy our minds that the dealings of the LORD will be merciful with regard to us, all the days of our life. Under every anxiety, and in every trouble, let us reason with our fears, and say, "He that spared not his only Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him also freely give us all things."

POWER AND EFFICACY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

A Sermon

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Ezekiel xi. 19, 20.—"*And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances and do them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their* GOD."

FEW subjects have been more obscured and injured, by the injudicious and unauthorized remarks and representations of its friends, than a change of heart wrought by the power of the HOLY GHOST, and making the followers of CHRIST new creatures. This, indeed, might have been expected from the unenlightened and fiery zeal of some of its advocates, especially when the difficulty and the extreme delicacy of the subject is considered. When the operations of the mind on ordinary subjects are spoken of, great obscurity and confusion often result from the unavoidable imperfection of human language: it being in the nature of the case impossible to speak of spirit, in other words than those which are strictly appropriate only to matter. And this is even more obviously the case when the subject of mental operations and emotions is religion; a subject in itself of an elevated and spiritual nature; and which has suffered far more than any other from the disadvantage of being treated of, in words not strictly or adequately appropriate to its delicate, hallowed, and spiritual exercises and sentiments.

But although these dificulties are such that vast allowance ought, in all fairness, to be made for them; yet they by no means proceed to an extent seriously to embarrass the diligent inquirer; much less to throw the subject beyond the field of legitimate and fair investigation; or to render the truth illusory or dubious. Very far the reverse. For, when the point of inquiry is substantial matter of fact, it is, comparatively, of little consequence whether it be on the world of matter or of mind. The actual spiritual phenomena of our natures are as demonstrable as those which relate only to the body. In the latter case, indeed, we use words derived from

matter in their plain and obvious sense. But the figurative meaning of these forms of expression, when there is a change of subject from matter to mind, is no less clear and convincing, though it may be somewhat less definite and precise, than the literal meaning. For example: an heart of stone gives me as strong an idea of a persisting, callous, ungenerous, wrong state of feeling, as an hand of flesh gives me the idea of a material instrument which I daily use; and an heart of flesh, when evidently used in a figurative sense, in like manner, gives me as clear an idea of a warm, active, generous, right state of feeling, as, in a literal sense, it does of the great organ of motion to the vital fluid.

Bearing these remarks, on the use of figurative language upon religious subjects, in mind, let us next address ourselves to the immediate object of our present argument, which is—

I. To show that every moral feeling of our hearts is in such a state as to render some change desirable, and necessary.

II. That the expectation of a change to absolute perfection, does not appear to be authorised either by Scripture or by experience:

III. That a change of external conduct evidently does not amount to the thing desired: and—

IV. That the change effected by the Gospel is of that kind, and goes to that extent, which the necessities and peculiarities of the case require: and—

V. Is effected in the most obvious and reasonable manner by the operation of adequate and appropriate causes.

I. Before treating of a change of heart, it is very natural and proper that inquiry should be made whether the heart and affections of men are so wrong, and in such disorder, as to be susceptible of being amended. For, if the point were established, that the motives of the heart were as pure as possible, and the internal, real, moral character of men absolutely faultless, there would evidently be no room for improvement; and all further inquiry into the reality of a change of heart would be precluded.

In what summary method, then, shall we demonstrate the fact, that the innermost motives, feelings, and desires of the hearts of

all men, are far from being pure and good; and that a moral change is desirable? What method more summary and conclusive than to seize the concessions of the very panegyrists of human nature, and to prove, from these concessions, enough for our present purposes? All such eulogists, if they have written much, will be found to have conceded, first, that all history is virtually a record of the foibles, follies, and vices of men; and next, that, however pure the virtuous may pretend to be, they are, nevertheless, inwardly actuated by some secret bad motive. It is believed that no opposer of the scriptural doctrine of a depraved and bad heart, living or dead, could be named, who has not, an hundred times over, either in words or writing, deliberately or inadvertently, made admissions to the above effect. Must not, then, an incalculable number of convincing facts have extorted these confessions from the most unlikely quarters? and must not that be obviously, as well as demonstrably, true, which even objectors cannot speak or write about, without admitting either virtually or expressly? Sustained by this solitary argument, I fearlessly appeal to your candor at once to admit, that human nature is in such a disordered and depraved condition that improvement is manifestly possible and exceedingly desirable.

II. Our next inquiry is, supposing this most desirable change to be amply provided for, under the blessed government of God, whether it may be expected to be instantaneous and entire. An argument from the nature and reason of things, and from the analogies of the divine government, is certainly not the best method of demonstration; nevertheless, it often serves an admirable purpose in predisposing and preparing the mind for demonstration. Reason and analogy, then, are decidedly against such an expectation. Barren and intractable portions of land cannot be instantaneously reclaimed, even by the best possible methods of cultivation. And uncivilized and barbarous hordes, cannot, by any process of civilization, be elevated, at once, from their condition of wretchedness. So far as we know, all ameliorating processes are, of necessity, gradual and slow. And there is nothing in Scripture, or in experience, to show that the moral benefits of Christianity, either in the case of nations or individuals, are dispensed by any

other law. The apparent operation of these causes, may, in respect to the suddenness of the process, differ very considerably, and the real difference, indeed, between one case and another, may be very great; and yet the general law of a gradual progressive change may still prevail.

I do not speak thus of the turning point, or precise moment of time, when and where the moral changes may begin; but I speak complexly, and generally, of the change as a whole. And the Bible, experience, and observation, constrain me to believe that no good man was ever made perfectly good in a moment; indeed that no perfectly good man (save the LORD JESUS CHRIST alone, as far as HE WAS man,) ever did exist upon earth. And I am, therefore, constrained to believe that the moral change, for which the LORD of the whole earth hath made ample provision in the Gospel, is not, in strict propriety of speech, either perfect or instantaneous. In looking for a changed man, then, we must not be looking for a faultless and perfect man; and in seeking for evidence that there is a reality in the moral change sometimes wrought by the influence of the Bible, we are not to look for a change which leaves no room for further amendment.

III. What, then? it may be asked—is this change superficial, apparent, external only? a change from being notoriously vicious and bad, to being outwardly strict and exemplary; from living in the indulgence of personal and social vices; to a most pure and blameless moral deportment? This question is easily answered by another; does a change of outward deportment necessarily involve a change of the inward feelings and motives of the heart? Is it not possible for a man to cover up the basest principles and designs, under the graces of a moral and attractive exterior, just as he can hide many personal defects by his attitudes and his dress? If so, then a change of heart, as the very form of expression itself implies, is far more than a mere change of the outward conduct.

IV. This brings us to a nearer inspection of the real nature of a change of heart. And, to make the point more abundantly clear and convincing, some of the disorders of our moral natures will be recounted, both as it regards ourselves, our fellow creatures, and our moral Governor, and then the inquiry will be, whether the

Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ contains the moral power of correcting these disorders; or, in other words, of changing our hearts in these several respects.

1. I am persuaded that it is but too apparent to every one of you, that your impatience, irritability, pride, and passion, miserably impair and prevent your own happiness. In other words, that every man is his own worst enemy—far the worst. That he might be contented, cheerful, and happy, notwithstanding the frailties of his body, the disappointment of his hopes, and the afflictions and trials of his lot; if it were not for the wrong feelings, which live, and rule, and scatter wretchedness through all his inner man. His restless ambition; his inordinate love of money; his unreasonable anxieties; his feverish, unfounded hopes and fears, constitute the real secrets of his dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Upon looking thus into your own bosoms, must you not at once admit, that any power which could regulate these internal disorders; dissipate the illusions under which you are sensible that you are led astray; correct what is inordinate and wrong; and purify what is unholy and bad, would be as welcome as the creative voice of the Omnipotent, in speaking life and harmony out of the dreariness of chaos; and the change that would follow would be as great, and real, and glorious, as that change which did attend the utterance of that creative voice? This power is faith in the ever blessed Son of God.

2. Are the inward feelings of our hearts towards our neighbors any better, or more under control, than those which have respect to our own immediate personal happiness? Are there, amongst us, no unholy strifes and emulations; no envious or slanderous thoughts; no covetings and hatreds; no feelings of malice or revenge? Whilst there are, how utterly impossible it must be that men should live in quietness and peace together; or that they should enjoy any real satisfaction in their own bosoms? From whence come party contentions and bitterness, wars and fightings; come they not hence even of the wrong and sinful feelings of the heart? From whence come theft and rapine, lying and chicanery, backbitings, strifes, and murders; do they not spring as naturally and spontaneously from a bad heart as water

from a fountain? And let me ask, if by any means men could be brought always to tell the truth, to deal with honesty, and to do to others as they would have others do to them; above all, if they could ever be brought to do good to those who despitefully use them and persecute them, to love as brethren, and to pray for their persecutors and enemies; whether such a revolution in all the natural propensities and strong passions of our natures would not deserve to be called a change of heart, a new birth, or even a new creation? Could any forms of expression, indeed, suffice to describe so great a change? And yet this the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST has often done, and is daily doing; and we shall see directly that HE who designed that it should effect this change, implanted in it a power vast enough to produce it.

3. But the true secret of all the other faults and disorders of our moral natures evidently lies in our not having right feelings toward GOD, our most holy and rightful moral Governor. Who is there that habitually refers all his actions to the will of GOD? Who, before he acts, thinks of asking, not what is agreeable to himself, or what will exalt or benefit him amongst his fellow earth-worms, but what is acceptable to GOD; what is well pleasing right, and in HIS eyes? And yet, though so few act as if the eye of GOD were upon them, and they strictly accountable to Him for every thought, and feeling, and desire, it is perfectly evident that no one can be sure of feeling and acting always as he should, unless he is in the habit of referring his actions to the will of GOD; and scrutinizing his motives, as they appear in His sight. Here it is, at the very source and centre of the motives of action, that every thing in the moral nature of man not only appears out of place, but positively sinful and wrong. Self-indulgence of any and of every kind appears most sinful of all, when regarded in the true point of light, as being an abuse of the gifts of GOD; as tending to the confusion and destruction of social happiness; as precipitating the ruin of the slaves of passion, when GOD willed their happiness. Lying, stealing, oppression, wrath, revenge, assume their appropriate hues of guilt, when regarded as breaches of the benevolent and gracious laws which our Creator hath placed as the safe guards of the best interests of his creatures; and therefore

are even less injurious to society than they are odious and offensive to the holy and good GOD. And surely the grand disorder of our moral nature; the forgetfulness of GOD; the dislike of his wholesome restraints; the hatred of his holy requirements; the idolatrous preference of self gratification, of honor, wealth or pleasure, to his favor; is that grand master-sin of the soul, which brings along with it the deepest degradation and misery, because it entails His sorest curse: and is that disorder which must, in the very first instance, be set right, before we can even begin to do as we ought. Here, therefore, it is that the inconceivable force of the Bible motives is brought to bear. This is the mountainous difficulty which JESUS CHRIST came to remedy and remove. Here it is that GOD places his healing touch; or rather, manifests his new creating power. The heart has new and right feelings implanted in it towards GOD, and towards His SON JESUS CHRIST through faith in His name, and by the power of the HOLY GHOST. Herein the vital essence of the new birth consists. Herein the promise of the text is fulfilled. "I will be their GOD," is the new relation formed; the immediate result is "the giving of a new spirit;" and the fruits are, that "they walk in his statutes, and his ordinances, and do them." Thanks be to GOD for his unspeakable gifts; immortal praise, for the new creating grace of his Spirit!

V. The only point which remains to be discussed is, whether there is remarkable fitness in Bible considerations to produce these great and most desirable changes. That there is, might have been inferred from the benevolent design of the Gospel, and from considering who is its author; it being self-evident that our moral Governor would not have provided a religion for a race of beings alienated from him, without infusing into it a power to restore them to his service and his favor. And the same result comes to us abundantly attested by observation: exceedingly bad men have been made radically better by the Gospel, but never by any other religion; never by any other moral influence. But it has, throughout this discourse, been my aim, not so much to bring forward the strongest arguments, as the plainest exhibition in my power, of the real merits of the case before us. And I shall, therefore proceed to make my appeal to your understanding and your hearts,

by asking, whether constant reference to the kindness and love of the Savior, in parting for a time with the enjoyments of Heaven, and consenting to humble himself to be made man, and to die for us upon the cross, would not possess power beyond all other considerations, to correct all that is evil and depraved in the heart of man? What sin of the human heart would any reasonable person wish to retain or cherish, if he were all the time standing near the cross upon which his dearest friend, and that friend the ever blessed Son of GOD, was dying for his sake? Could he in such a place be puffed up with pride, or be misled by self-love, or indulge discontent and murmuring under the allotments of ALMIGHTY GOD? Impossible. All the base, inbred secret passions and desires of the heart of man, perish when the Cross of CHRIST is in view! Neither can the malevolent or wrong feelings of our heart towards our fellow creatures, any more than their inward and selfish feelings, bear the light that beams from the face of the crucified JESUS. Falsehood, deceit, anger, malice, revenge, appear insupportably wrong in the presence of the most meek, forgiving, and bleeding Savior. Nor is there any manner of sinful feeling or action towards our fellow beings which does not receive an insupportable rebuke, and an absolute death blow from the tender words and pleading actions of the Son of GOD, when he died for transgressions not his own, and died praying for his enemies. And, surely, if ever the alienated thoughts and feelings of rebellious creatures are made to rush back towards GOD, in the full tide of overflowing sorrow, thankfulness, and love; it must be when, for their sake, and for their salvation, He gives up his dear, his only begotten Son, that "whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." When the heart is once prostrated, and thoroughly pervaded by a sense of the love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, from that moment it begins to love what GOD loves, and to hate what he hates. And then it is that the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST regains his lost supremacy in the hearts of his creatures; which is, as I conceive, the new birth; and which therefore is the very thing intended in the glowing prediction of our text.

I have scarcely time left, my dear hearers, to turn to you and

ask whether you do not often feel humbled and distressed, and sometimes seriously alarmed at the power which your depraved and sinful feelings have over you; whether it does not seem to you most unaccountable and unmanly that you should find it so easy to break your most solemn vows and engagements, and so hard to keep the slightest good resolution? whether the frequent and numberless instances of your pride, duplicity, anger, and unkind feelings, do not sometimes distress you greatly, and make you feel that the thraldom of your sins is deeply degrading and wretched? And when your thoughts hurry to the confines of the dead; when you think of leaving your house and lands, your business and your pleasures, your friends and your companions; when, in imagination, you stand before the bar of God, in order to give account of the deeds done in the body; do you not shudder to own to yourselves that you are not fit to die; not fit to stand before an holy God; not fit to enter through the pure portals of the better world? If not fit, what is the reason? Is it not that your hearts are evil, and need changing? But how can they be changed? When will they be? Who will do the great, the benevolent, the all-important work for you?

Have you ever asked these questions with intense interest and feeling until now? Do you so ask them even now? Would to God I could hope that you did, for then my reply would be given with a sense of satisfaction and joy, never felt before in all my ministrations amongst you. Then should I speak to you of a throne of grace, satisfied that you would go there to pray for the blessed influences of the Holy Ghost. There should I point you to a Savior, and repeat some of his gracious promises, convinced that they would be to you words of life and joy.

But whether you feel as I could wish or not, I cannot dismiss you without expressing the profound conviction of my mind and heart, that you are very depraved, and very unhappy, and must remain so—nay, must be growing daily worse and worse for ever, until you are born again; and that nothing can make you better; nothing can impart true happiness to you, except it be such a view of the love of God, in the gift of his Son, to die for you; as shall constrain you to hate and to forsake all that is evil, and to choose

and pursue whatever is well pleasing in his sight. Then, and not till then, will the liberty of the unbound captive—the satisfaction of the cleansed leper—the joy of the reprieved criminal—the generous ecstasy of the reconciled child, be yours. Then, and not till then, will the spirit of the upper world make your heart its temple; and a share of the blessedness of the upper world be given you in foretaste of its perfect and endless enjoyment.

HYMN.

THE SINNER SAVED BY THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE.

WHAT shall the dying sinner do
That seeks relief from all his wo?
Where shall the guilty consience find
Ease for the torment of his mind?

How shall we get our crimes forgiven
Or form our natures fit for Heaven?
Can souls, all o'er defiled with sin,
Make their own powers and passions clean?

In vain we search, in vain we try,
'Till JESUS brings his Gospel nigh;
'T is there such power and glory dwell
As saves rebellious souls from hell.

This is the pillar of our hope
That bears our fainting spirits up;
We read the *Grace*, we trust the word,
And find salvation in the LORD.

Let men, or angels dig the mines,
Where nature's golden treasure shines;
Brought near the doctrine of the Cross,
All nature's gold appears but dross.

Should vile blasphemers with disdain
Pronounce the truths of JESUS vain,
I'll meet the scandal and the shame,
And sing and triumph in his name.

THE RT. REV. WM. WHITE, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

THIS Right Reverend Prelate was consecrated in the Chapel of the Archiepiscopal Palace, at Lambeth, in England, on Sunday, the 4th of February, 1787, by the Most Rev. JOHN MOORE, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. The Most Rev. WILLIAM MARKHAM, Lord Archbishop of York, the Right Rev. CHARLES MOSS, Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the Right Rev. JOHN HINCHCLIFF, Lord Bishop of Peterborough, being present, and assisting—and is believed to have been longer in the Episcopate than any Prelate now living.